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SUBJECT: KUWAIT MEDIA REACTION - ELECTIONS: WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION
AND THE GOVERNMENT'S POSITION

Block Quotes

Thursday, June 15, 2006

-- Editor-in-chief of the pro-government Arabic-language daily Al-Seyassah Ahmed Al-Jarallah penned on the newspaper's front page under the title "Talk of Night Erased by Elections' Morning" (6/15): "What is being said now during the elections season should be contained by not reacting to it, no matter what the candidates claim. It should be heard without leaving room for our emotions to mislead us and should not be believed because it is the talk of night, which will be erased by the morning light of Election Day. The declaration of the results and who won and who lost will make it evaporate. Kuwaiti voters will listen to who they want, but in the end will vote for who they want, not who fooled them with their speeches."

-- Mansour Al-Saeedi commented in the pro-government Arabic-language daily Al-Seyassah under the title "Women's Rights and the Elections" (6/15): "All women are optimistic that they will win and are all betting on the results; despite the fact that a realistic outlook says that their chances of success are weak, very weak. All the women candidates expect a victory for women in these elections and expect that women will support them with their votes. Also, all of them with exception are for the best women getting into parliament. But, women's participation on a national level is very weak. The percentage of Kuwait women who are running for office is about 2% which is very low and is not representative of the number of women in Kuwaiti society."

-- Thabet Ibrahim Al-Haroun editorialized in the moderate Arabic-language daily Al-Rai Al-Aam under the title "Women" (6/15): "I highly doubt the rumors about women selling their votes and I consider it a desperate attempt to get at the pioneering experience of women's rights in Kuwait and to kill their aspirations and their great role in shaping a comprehensive social fabric. I hope their presence at seminars will translate into presence at the ballot boxes. Some men consider these elections redundant and that is a challenge to them. So, which will prevail, men's desperation or women's patience?"

-- Khawla Al-Atiqi wrote in the moderate Arabic-language daily Al-Watan under the title "Elections" (6/15): "I have noticed during my attendance at electoral headquarters women's enthusiasm to attend and hear what candidates have to say about their platforms and what they will do for women if they win. Most of the women I spoke to, assuming that they are sympathizers or relatives of the candidate,

were not naive enough to reinforce my assumptions. Most of them when asked, even the older ones, answered that they will hear what they have to say first, and then decide who to vote for. I must say I fear for the candidates I work with as I thought that familial, tribal, or ideological affiliation would be the deciding factor."

-- Liberal writer Mr. Abdul Latif Al-Duaij maintained in the progressive Arabic-language daily Al-Qabas under the title "The Government Enraged" (6/15): "The government lost its mind a long time ago. It lost its mind when it came under the leadership of the corrupt and those hostile and demeaning to God's creatures. It lost its mind when it insisted on continuing to deny human rights and to combat attempts at reform. Today, or more specifically yesterday, it lost its nerve. That means that the country will not enter into a dark tunnel as is usually said, rather, it will enter a powerful vortex that may sadly destroy everything. The decision to prevent candidates' media activities is tyrannical. A decision meant to monopolize the media and provide coverage for those who cooperate with the government. The [newly] established satellite channels transmit from outside of Kuwait, therefore the Kuwaiti government should not have jurisdiction over them or their programs."

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